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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the writings and character of Confucius from the perspective of his title of the "First Teacher." Confucius functioned as a scholar who, in a time of political chaos, attempted to glean from the past those principles and attitudes capable both of serving the social order well and of enduring. To achieve peaceful reform, Confucius designated as the specific objective of education "Chun Tzu" or the Superior Man who, with the effectiveness of his moral example, would cause the people to be good. Two aspects of Confucius's thought that should be understood are that a) nature is basically good but unguided human nature has lost the way, and it is therefore necessary to restore the original condition by finding the Path of Duty and the System of Instruction of the past and to teach and apply them to the present; and b) human society is hierarchically constructed into classes of mental and menial workers and it is to the former that education is brought. Confucius's curriculum was constructed around the principle of "Li" or "the spirit of living" which must be adhered to in internal as well as external action. The curriculum was informal (with textbooks playing a minor role), liberal, and pragmatic in that it prepared a man for a position in government. His methods were informal, involving questions and discussions, learning at one's own pace, and self-evaluation or evaluation by oral questioning. (JA)

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF CONFUCIUS

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SOME ASPECTS OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM OF CONFUCIUS

"The Sagest of Sages", "the First Teacher", "the Wisest Man" in ancient China are titles given to Kung Fu-tzu. These titles of honor reflect some of the veneration bestowed upon Confucius by the Chinese and his admirers. The title "First Teacher" attracted me, and through studying Confucius as revealed in the Analects, I was rewarded by learning about an ancient approach to education that was and is quite relevent. This paper concerns itself with those aspects of Confucius' educational system found in the Analects that help to explain the titles bestowed upon him. Perhaps by understanding something about Confucius and his philosophy of education we might be able to better understand another facet of the people and culture of China.

The basic outline to be followed is: first the background of Confucius' world needs to be given so some of the problems he faced and his proposed solutions will be better understood. Next, pre-Confucian education must be recognized so his educational principles will be seen in their originality. Then short summaries will present his motives and proposed goal for teaching, some basic assumptions underlying his thought, the curriculum he used, some methods of his teaching, and a conclusion.

From the eighth century BCE onward, the Chou dynasty became the victim of a series of events that caused its decline and fall. Two events in particular hastened this. One was the invasion of foreign and

barbarian tribes and the other was a break-down in the central government which permitted much internal strife and war. In 771 BCE an invasion of the tartar Hsiung Nu, a nomadic people from the northern steppes, caused the Chou rulers to move their capital from the Wei River area to the east to the Lo River area. With this abandonment of their "Western" capital, the Chou rulers lost much of their power, and the rule of the middle and western lands of their empire fell into the hands of their vassals. It wasn't long until the map of China resembled a crazy-quilt pattern with fifteen major states and a number of smaller states which waged continual wars, with each other and against the alien tribes that were constantly invading the area.

> Between 680 B.C. and 590 B.C. five powerful feudal lords, usurping the royal title, assumed in succession the supremacy over all the other states in the Middle Kingdom, an illegality which Confucius criticized in the Spring and Autumn Annals (Ch'un Ch'iu), chronological history of his own home state.[1]

In 546 BCE fourteen of the states formed an alliance that was to preserve the peace but due to the absence of any central authority to enforce the agreements, the alliance failed and three centuries of intermittent war and chaos followed, a period referred to by the Chinese as the "Era of the warring states." But by the end of this period, seven states emerged

1. Helmut G. Callis, China, Confucian and Communist, (New York: Henry Holt and Co., Inc., 1959), p. 113.

where at the beginning of the Chou dynasty there had been 1700 states.[2]

Around 551 BCE Confucius was born in the little dukedom of Lu. Politically Lu was not of much significance but it did enjoy a considerable cultural reputation and since it was part of the personal domain of the reigning family of Chou, it was proud of its ancient historical foundations. It was here that Confucius grew up, received his training, and spent many of his years teaching.

Confucius lived during the trying years of the weakening of the central government of the Chou rule. It was an age when many rulers were evil and corrupt and the mass of the people were too ignorant to change things. It was an age when the established feudal society was breaking down and foundations for a new society were being laid. The times were not peaceful and Confucius knew the tragedy of war, misery, and immorality as did many others. As a result of this turmoil, new ideas were advanced in the hope that a stable political and social order might be established. Questions such as: How can the states exist together harmoniously and in peace? How can the chaos of the political scene be turned into order? How can the collapsing social order be made strong? were being asked and Confucius' life was spent in seeking and teaching answers to these questions.

Although Confucius is called the "First Teacher", this does not imply that there were neither schools nor teaching prior to his time. The very fact that writing ante-dates the Chou dynasty is a good indication

2. Ibid., p. 114.

that some form of instruction and teaching took place long before the time of Confucius.[3] Scholars agree that education of some kind took place in pre-Confucian times but the exact nature of it is difficult to determine.[4] Yen Sun Ho in his book Chinese Education from the Western Viewpoint, pointed out that as early as Emperor Shun (2357 BCE - 2206 BCE), Chi was appointed Minister of Education to superintend the teaching of the "Five Humanities"[5] which were: the relations between father and son, king and subject, husband and wife, old and young, and friend and friend. The relations were to be of love, righteousness, attention to their honor, respect, and sincerity. From this it appears that the aim of education was ethical and social. By the latter part of the Chou dynasty, the content of education had expanded somewhat to include, in addition to the "Five Humanities", the arts of music, archery, horsemanship and chariot-driving. The last two skills might have been added as a result of the unsettled times and the growing importance of military preparedness. Schools in our sense of the word did not exist.[6]

The instruction given at the time of Confucius was done by officials of the government as a task in addition to their official

3. John K. Shryock, The Origin and Development of the State Cult of Confucius, (New York: Century Co., 1932), p. 66.
4. Herrlee G. Creel, Confucius, The Man and the Myth, (New York: The John Cay Co., 1949), p. 75
5. Yen Sun Ho, Chinese Education from the Western Viewpoint, (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1913), p. 12.
6. Yen Sun Ho contends that by the time of Confucius there were lower schools, higher schools, and national colleges to which students might go. This idea is presented in the third chapter where he lays out a very advanced system of schools including ascending levels of instruction coupled with a complex curriculum. Creel, on the other hand, does not indicate that such a system existed and implies the advanced system as described by Ho was a later development. Creel, Confucius, p. 75.

duties.[7] These officials were private tutors who taught the children of the nobility so their children would some day possess a few tools needed in the event they were called upon to rule. Their lack of a public school system does not indicate a deficient culture. The Book of Changes, The Book of History and The Book of Poetry,[8] in existence at that time and an integral part of the curriculum, indicate the high state of cultural attainment achieved during the Chou period. Thus by the time of Confucius, an educational system of some scope was already in existence possessing an established curriculum and place in society.[9] Those who did the teaching did it as a side-line and those to be educated were children of the nobility.

It is difficult to determine exactly how Confucius became interested in teaching; perhaps it was due to the influence of his mother, his first teacher. It is reported in the Analects that Confucius said this:

> At fifteen I set my heart upon learning. At thirty, I had planted my feet firm upon the ground. At forty, I no longer suffered from perplexities. At fifty, I knew what were the biddings of Heaven. At sixty, I heard them with docile ear. At seventy, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right.[10]

7. Creel, Confucius, The Man and the Myth, p. 27
8. Arthur Waley, The Analects of Confucius, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1949), Book 7:17. Confucius indicated here that he used ~~thses~~ these works in his educational system. All of the quotes from the Analects are from this translation.
9. Howard S. Galt, A History of Chinese Educational Institutions, (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1951), vol. I, p. 68.
10. Analects, 2:4.

From this quote we can conclude that at a relatively early age Confucius determined to devote his life to learning and that by the time he was a middle aged man, he was well on his way to achieving his goal. Perhaps Confucius' first venture into the field of teaching took the form of informal meetings with some of his friends during which the group debated various topics. Soon the ability and sagacity of Confucius became apparent and he became the master of the group.[11] This venture was interrupted by the death of Confucius' mother. After her death he went into a period of mourning lasting twenty-seven months. How he occupied his time is not known but it can be conjectured he used his time to further his study and learning so that at the end of the mourning period, he had accumulated more knowledge. At the age of twenty-seven he returned to teaching[12] and by the time he was thirty-four, he was a distinguished teacher of ceremony and an expert on the Code of Li.[13] His teaching career continued until his death.

In answering the question - What motivated Confucius to teach? - we must turn again to an examination of the times in which he lived. As has been stated earlier, the times were plagued with chaos, civil war, disorder, and uncertainty about the future. Confucius assigned these ills of his day to the fact that the leaders of society had neglected the old rites and ceremonies; they either ignored them or performed them incorrectly without the proper attitudes. By abusing

11. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 29.
12. G.G. Alexander, Confucius, The Great Teacher, (London: Trubner & Co., Inc., 1890), p. 48
13. Liu Wu-Chi, A Short History of Confucian Philosophy, (London: Whitefriars Press, 1955), p. 18

the rites and ceremonies, they abused the moral and social order and caused disorder among the people.[14] Confucius surveyed the scene and felt it could be improved if men would only follow the proper set of principles and attitudes.

He searched the past and gleaned from it principles and attitudes which had been capable of enduring and had served well in other social orders. He then recommended them for his own age and for the future. He was not only a scholar interested in the transmission of knowledge from the past to the future, but also a reformer interested in the improvement of the existing social order through the use of time proven remedies. Thus social-political considerations and reform motivated many of his ideas and educational principles.[15]

The motivation for reform determined to a great extent the goal of education. The goal was not reform of society by route of violent revolution; on the contrary, it was reform by peaceful activity from within. In a way it might be described in this manner: Confucius possessed and taught principles which in reality were spores of yeast; if the yeast would be given the opportunity to work in the dough of

14. William T. de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, Sources of Chinese Tradition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 20. cf Lin Yutang, The Wisdom of Confucius (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), p. 11.
15. Arthur F. Wright & Denis Twitchett, eds., Confucian Personalities (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 7.

society, it would leaven it.[16] The reform was to be accomplished through the process of instruction.[17] In Book 13 of the Analects, the following episode is reported:

> When the Master was going to Wei, Jan Ch'iu drove him. The Master said, "What a dense population!" Jan Ch'iu said, "When the people have multiplied, what next should be done for them?" The Master said, "Enrich them." Jan Ch'iu said, "When one has enriched them, what next should be done for them?" The Master said, "Instruct them."[18]

The goal of instruction was not narrow, unless one calls narrow societal reform, the bringing about of good government by the education of good officials. As far as Confucius was concerned, the relationship of government and education was so intertwined that governors should be educators and educators governors. Further, governors govern not because of heredity nor because of power but because of their virtue and ability.[19] Thus, Confucius tried to persuade rulers to turn over their governments to a

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16. The following quotes from the Analects illustrate this:

> The Master said, A single change could bring Ch'i to the level of Lu; and a single change would bring Lu to the Way. 6:22
>
> The Master said, 'He who can himself submit to ritual is Good.' If (a ruler) could for one day 'himself submit to ritual,' everyone under Heaven would respond to his Goodness. For Goodness is something that must have its source in the ruler himself; it cannot be got from others. 12:1
>
> The Master said, If only someone were to make use of me, even for a single year, I could do a great deal; and in three years, I could finish off the whole work. 13:10

17. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 32. Here Creel points out that Confucius advocated loyalty to principle and not to individuals, reform by persuasion and not by violence.
18. Analects, 13:9.
19. Ibid., 4:14 sheds some light on this:

> The Master said, He does not mind not being in office; all he minds about is whether he has qualities that entitle him to office. He does not mind failing to get recognition; he is too busy doing the things that entitle him to recognition.

group of well trained virtuous and capable men he had instructed in the proper Way.[20]

Educators usually have some conception of specific objectives to be achieved in education. Confucius' objective was the Chun Tzu which has been translated as Superior Man, Ideal Man, Gentleman, or Man-at-his-best. The Superior Man was to be an individual who would be a man of virtue and culture and who would secure control of society by being a leader of such ability and character that he would influence society to follow his example.[21] The Superior Man would be refined, courteous, graceful, always benign and upright; he would incarnate every virtue and would exert his personal magnetism over all people.[22] The effectiveness of his moral example would cause the people to be good, for his own influence and conduct would compel obedience.[23] In short, the Superior Man, by having been properly educated would sincerely and completely perform the "Five Humanities" and the five virtues.[24] This was Confucius' behavioral objective: to achieve a Superior Man who by his actions, thoughts, motivations, and words would be so virtuous and good, that his example would cause all segments of society to follow him. Thus the reform would occur.[25]

20. Creel, Confucius, The Man and the Myth, p. 2.
21. P.W. Kuo, The Chinese System of Public Education (New York: Columbia University Press, 1915), p. 15.
22. Lancelot Forster, Asia, "The Revival of Confucius," (September 1935), p. 532.
23. Ibid., p. 533. cf. Wright & Twitchett, Confucian Personalities, p. 7.
24. Dudley Tyng, Journal of American Oriental Society, "The Confucian Utopia," (Vol. 54, 1930). This is what Tyng calls the "Confucian Utopia".
25. Edward J. Jurji, The Christian Interpretation of Religion, (New York: MacMillan Co., 1952), p. 174. Here Jurji says Confucius was the first to lay emphases on the conception of the Superior Man as a moral person rather than one who was socially prominent. A.F. Wright in his chapter "Values, Roles, & Personalities" concurs with this view. Wright & Twitchett, Confucian Personalities, pp. 6-9.

The motivation for teaching grew out of an optimistic hope for the future in the midst of the chaos of the political moral condition of society; and the objective of education was to achieve the Superior who could serve as the reformers in and of society. Underlying these were certain basic assumptions. The opening sentences of the Chung Yung provide a clue to one of the basic assumptions of Confucius' thought.

> What Heaven has conferred is called nature. An accordance with this nature is called Path of Duty; the regulation of this path is called the System of Instruction.[26]

This meant that Heaven had given man his basic nature, and Confucius assumed that nature was good.[27] From this Confucius held that ethical values, the structure of society, the state, and civilization in general had their origins in the good decrees of Heaven, and that with the proper instruction and education, the decrees were achievable in society. He also assumed there was a way for nature to exist in harmony with the cosmic order.[28] But this harmony was not attained by an unguided human nature. There was a Path of Duty and a System of Instruction to guide nature in the Way to harmonious human experience.

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26. James Legge, The Sacred Books of the East, ed. Max Muller, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), Vol. XVIII, p. 300.
27. Homer H. Dubs, Journal of American Oriental Society, "Nature in the Teaching of Confucius," (Vol. 50, 1930), p. 233-237. In this article Dubs contends that nature is not basically good but is evil. He felt that the only secure metaphysical background for the understanding of Confucius is to see an evil world. "If man is good, why train and educate him?" Creel answered this in the same Journal (Vol. 51, 1931) and reasserted that nature in Confucian thinking is good. Herrlee G. Creel, Sinism, A study of the Evolution of the Chinese World-View, (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1929), p. 20.
28. Galt, History of Chinese Educational Institutions, p. 85.

Yet although the universe was fundamentally good, for some reason, it had been perverted from its original state. Confucius' technique for restoring the original condition was to find the Path of Duty and the System of Instruction by which men acted in the past Golden Good Age, and then teach and apply them to the present as completely as common sense and society would allow.[29] The Path of Duty and System of Instruction to be used to restore that which had been lost was called the Way (Tao). Because the Way was fundamentally good, Confucius was convinced that antagonism and suspicion, strife, and suffering were largely unnecessary and unnatural; that men's true interests did not conflict but complemented each other; that war and injustice and exploitation brought harm to those who profited from them as well as to those who suffered from them.[30] Thus the Way was the striving for the order, harmony, and perfection that had once existed socially and cosmically and which, it was hoped, could be brought into existence again.[31] The rebirth was to be accomplished through discipline, education, and the restoration of 'Jen' or virtue.[32]

There is another basic assumption that must be considered, Confucius' Hierarchal view of society. The gist of it is found in the

29. Creel, Sinism, p. 91.
30. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 123.
31. Creel, Sinism. p. 45.
32. Waley, Analects, pp. 27-29. In the Introduction of his translation of the Analects, Waley gave an excellent summary of the meaning of 'Jen' which he translated as 'Good,' or 'Goodness'.

Analects.

> Master K'ung said, Highest are those who are born wise. Next are those who become wise by learning. After them come those who have to toil painfully in order to acquire learning. Finally, to the lowest class of the common people belong those who toil painfully without ever managing to learn.[33]

Basically this indicated that for Confucius human society consisted and probably always will consist of two classes: the mental-workers and the manual-workers. The latter must be engaged in ceaseless toil and accept guidance from the former.[34] Confucius devoted his time to teaching those who were mental-workers rather than the larger mass of the manual-workers. He was not an educator devoted directly to the great mass but a teacher who concentrated upon the elite, those who would be the future leaders.[35]

In summary, some of the basic assumptions of Confucius' educational theory were: Heaven was a guiding power in establishing a good moral order but somehow man had gotten away from following that order. The best way to recover what had been lost was by the study of those virtues and principles of the past that had proven themselves endurable and workable. Once the Way had been recovered, it had to be taught to those who were going to lead and rule society

33. Analects, 16:9.
34. Reginald F. Johnston, Confucianism and Modern China, (New York: Rinehard and Co., Inc., 1935), p. 49.
35. de Bary, Chan, Sources of Chinese Tradition, p. 20.

by serving as examples to enduce others to follow the Way and lead all into perfection.[36]

So far we have touched briefly upon the background of Confucius' age, pre-Confucian education, Confucius' motive, behavioral objectives and some of the basic assumptions of his educational system. Let us now consider his curriculum and methods of teaching. By the word 'curriculum' is meant chiefly the content and sources of what was taught.

The general content of the curriculum was pragmatic in nature due to the behavioral objective of education, the training of men to serve in government. Basic to this pragmatic approach was the concept of 'Li' which originally denoted sacrifice,[37] but under the influence of Confucius, the meaning was broadened to include not only the proper conduct of religious observances but the attitude of the conduct.[38] Creel used the felicitous definition of 'good taste' to describe 'Li'.[39] This does not mean that 'Li' meant a strict adherence to a set of rules; nor was it a feeling of sincere emotions never expressed; it was the concept for the expression of the proper attitudes of the Way and corresponding actions. Thus for Confucius, to use 'Li' was to know the Way and to possess the ability to adjust it to new situations through the use of common sense and good taste.[40] Thus "Li' could be best defined not as a law for life but a spirit of living.[41]

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36. Ibid., p. 19.
37. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 82.
38. Ibid., p. 83.
39. Ibid., p. 84.
40. Ibid., p. 95.
41. Ibid., p. 94. Here Creel states: "The ideal gentleman can be summed up by saying he posses a certain loftiness of spirit." Compare this with Analects 17:11 where Confucius indicated the importance of 'Li'. "Ritual, ritual! Does it mean no more than presents of jade & silk?"

It is important to grasp this dual meaning of 'Li'. Since his curriculum was available for the highest and the lowest in society,[42] some of his students came to him from humble origins, ignorant in the ceremonies and rituals of government. Confucius had to teach them the forms of ritual and ceremony, or 'Li' in the external sacramental sense. Confucius also insisted 'Li' be internal and consit of a spiritual quality in the one performing the ceremonies.[43]

The study of 'Li' included the 'Five Humanities', and the cardinal virtues of kindness, rectitude, decorum, wisdom, and sincerity.[44] These fundamentals were mentioned in some of the Analects.

> A young man's duty is to behave well to his parents at home and to his elders abroad, to be cautious in giving promises and punctual in keeping them, to have kindly feelings toward everyone, but seek the intimacy of the Good. If, when all that is done, if he has any energy to spare, then let him study the polite arts.[45]
>
> A man who is not Good, what can he have to do with ritual?
> A man who is not Good, what can he have to do with music?[46]

This last statement from the Analects seems to imply that before a man should turn to ritual and music, he must be good, and being good meant partly that one performed the "Five Humanities" with the spirit of 'Li'.

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42. cf Analects 7:7. This effort was unique according to Wu Chi for "...there is no record of such a practice before the sixth century B.C." Wu Chi, A Short History of Confucian Philosophy, p. 19.
43. Creel, Confucius, The Man and the Myth, p. 87.
44. Jurji, The Christian Interpretation of Religion, p. 186.
45. Analects, 1:6
46. Analects, 3:3.

To implement the study and practice of the "Five Humanities" and the five virtues, and to further the education of his students in other areas, Confucius taught letters, ethics, devotion of the soul, and truthfulness.[47] These were supplemented by music, archery, and chariot-driving as part of the curriculum, they were not taught in the same spirit as in the schools of the nobility. In the latter, these two subjects were taught for military purposes while Confucius taught them as polite arts.[48]

Since many ceremonies were accompanied by music, the study of music was a necessary part of the curriculum. Confucius set the example with his expertisse on the se, a lute type instrument, and by his fondness for singing.[49] He believed that

> music was a matter of concern not only to the individual but even to the state, since some sorts of music were beneficial and other sorts were harmful to the character and thus to society.[50]

This concern about music is easily seen in the Analects. In Book 3:23 Confucius spoke about the importance of music with the Grand Masters of Lu. In another place it was reported that when Confucius was in Ch'i, he heard the Succession and for three months did not know the taste of meat. He indicated the producdity and importance of music with this

47. Analects 7:24. The "Five Humanities" and the cardinal virtues overlap into music, ritual, archery, chariot-driving, etc. It is important to remember this for it is possible to think that the "Five Humanities" and the virtues are distinct and separate segments of the Confucian curriculum when in fact they permeated it.
48. Analects 15:1. Confucius says here: "...warfare is a thing I have never studied."
49. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 88.
50. Ibid.

observation, "Music, music! Does it mean no more than bells and drums?"[51]

So far, very little has been said about text books, that phenomena so well known to present day educational systems. There is a reason for this silence. Confucius did not restrict his learning to the scope of literature alone as was to be done by the Confucianists.[52] He did refer to books and encouraged his students to study certain ones. The one most often recommended was the Book of Poetry (Shih).[53] Creel felt that since the main objective was the development of character, text books played a minor role.[54] There might be another good reason why text books played a minor role, the character of book construction. Books then consisted of bamboo strips bound together by a leather thong or some other material. Books were hand made and therefore relatively scarce and expensive. It would have been almost prohibitive for a student to purchase his own copy for private study and thus Confucius utilized other sources for instruction such as observation of the world and discussions.

Because of the educational objective, the cultivation of character and learning of the Superior Man so that he would learn to live in good taste with his relatives and fellow men and lead them to a better life, plus the problem with text books, Confucius stressed the informal aspect of education. By this is meant that he turned his

51. Analects 7:13, 17:11.
52. Leo Sherley-Price, Confucius and Christ (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), p. 147. cf Creel on this point where he agrees with Sherley-Price. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 95.
53. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 96.
54. Ibid., p. 95.

students to the school of life to learn from it. The Analects reflect this.

> ...look closely into his aims, observed the means by which he pursues them, discover what brings him content -- and can the man's real worth remain hidden from you, can it remain hidden from you?
>
> The Master said, Even when walking in a party of no more than three, I can always be certain of learning from those I am with. There will be good qualities I can select for imitation and bad ones that will teach me what requires correction in myself.
>
> The Master said, High office filled by men of narrow views, ritual performed without reverence, the forms of mourning observed without grief -- these are things I cannot bear to see.
>
> The Master said, A gentleman takes as much trouble to discover what is right as lesser men take to discover what will pay.
>
> Tzu-kung asked saying, Why was K'ung Wen Tzu called Wen ("The Cultured")? The Master said, Because he was diligent and so fond of learning that he was not ashamed to pick up knowledge even from his inferiors.[55]

At the beginning of this section dealing with curriculum, it was stated that the educational system of Confucius was pragmatic in that it was designed to prepare a man for a position in government.[56] It was pragmatic in another sense. It required the students not only to possess knowledge but also to put that knowledge into practice and thereby demonstrate that they were capable of understanding and applying what they had learned. For Confucius, education involved not only abstract scholarship but also the application of this scholarship to every day life. If a man

55. Analects, 2:10; 7:21; 3:26; 4:17; 5:14.
56. Wright & Twitchett, Confucian Personalities, p. 9.

failed in the latter, he had not and probably could not succeed in the former. Not only must the student take action, but the action must be done sincerely with good taste in accordance with "Li".[57] Various passages in the Analects illustrate this.

> The Master said, 'Filial sons' nowadays are people who see to it that their parents get enough to eat. But even dogs and horses are cared for to that extent. If there is no feeling or respect, wherein lies the difference?
>
> The Master said, I can talk to Yen Hui a whole day without his ever differing from me. One would think he was stupid. But if I inquire into his private conduct when he is not with me, I find that it surely demonstrates what I have taught him. No, Hui is by no means stupid.
>
> The Master said, (the true gentleman) does not preach what he practices till he has practiced what he preaches.
>
> The Master said, if you have made a mistake, do not be afraid of admitting the fact and amending your ways.
>
> The Master said, The Knight of the Way who thinks only of sitting quietly at home is not worthy to be called a Knight.[58]
>
> The Master said, A man may be able to recite the three hundred Songs; but, if when given a post in the government he cannot turn his merits to an account, or when sent on a mission to far parts, he cannot answer particular questions, however extensive his knowledge may be, of what use is it to him?[59]

Another famous saying and incident that illustrates Confucius' concern for action following knowledge is found in the Analects, Book 18:6. This is the story of Confucius and some of his students looking for a ford that would allow them to cross a stream. They asked a couple of

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57. One of the principles Confucius taught was adherence to the Way in thought and action rather than adherence and loyalty to individuals. When Ch'i is left the Way and followed loyalty to an individual, Confucius expelled him from his group of students. Analects 11:16.
58. Analects, 2:7; 2:9; 3:13; 9:4; 14:3.
59. Analects, 14:3

farmers about the location of the ford. The farmers recognized the students and suggested they ought to return from the world and accomplish more by being hermits rather than users of knowledge. Upon hearing this advice, Confucius rejected it for it was not the way of Tao. The true Way was to remain in the world and to attempt to reform it from within. Action must follow knowledge and lead to reform.

To summarize this section on curriculum, the following should be remembered:

1. The basic foundation of the curriculum was adherence to "Li" not only in external actions through following the dictates of the code but also by the proper inward attitude.
2. The "Five Humanities" and the cardinal virtues must be mastered before proceeding to further subjects of education.
3. Formal education consisted of literature, conduct of affairs, loyalty to superiors, truthfulness, music, archery, and chariot-driving.
4. Informal education consisted of studied observation of the world in order to learn the right and wrong paths of the Way.
5. Unless education was put into practice, it had not been adequately learned or understood.
6. The curriculum of Confucius emphasized a liberal education for the development of the personality more than the infusion of knowledge or the training of technical skills.

Thus, the curriculum used by Confucius illustrated that his approach was not founded upon his own personal views but upon a broadened concept of "Li", with the bed-rock of history, tradition, and culture. He sought to achieve in his students, through their formal and informal education, a high character and moral worth while at the same time encouraging them to apply their learning in the social and political life of the time; and by doing this, to become the Superior Man and thereby show and lead

all to what man ought to be.

There was one aspect of education conspicuously absent in the Confucian curriculum, religion. According to Galt, the religion at the time of Confucius was rather primitive, being a compound of nature worship in advanced form plus a strong concern for ancestor worship. Because of the close relationship between rites that were religious and ceremonies that venerated men, worship and ceremony were intertwined and overlapped into the formal education.[60] Yet Confucius was silent on the role of religion in his educational system. This silence can be understood from the Analects.

> Tzu-kung said, Our Master's views concerning culture and the outward insignia of goodness, we are permitted to hear; but about Man's nature and the ways of Heaven, he will not tell us anything at all.
>
> The Master never talked about prodigies, feats of strength, disorders or spirits.[61]
>
> The Master seldom spoke of profit, fate, or goodness.
>
> Tzu-lu asked how one should serve ghosts and spirits. The Master said, Till you have learned to serve men, how can you serve ghosts? Tzu-lu then ventured upon a question about the dead. The Master said, Till you know about the living, how are you to know about the dead?[62]

One other quote not directly related with religion does provide an excellent insight into the reason for the silence in the above quotations.

60. Galt, History of Chinese Educational Institutions, p. 99.
61. Analects, 5:12; 7:20.
62. Analects, 9:1; 11:11; 3:1.

> The Master said, How can we talk about the ritual of Hsia? The State of Ch'i supplies no adequate evidence. How can we talk about the ritual of Yin? The State of Sung supplies no adequate evidence. For there is lack both of documents and of learned men. But for this lack we should be able to obtain evidence from these two states.[63]

It is dangerous to use one example as the basis for a conclusion and yet it is this last quotation that gives us the principle which evidently guided Confucius on religion. Since there was no adequate evidence, no adequate documents or learned men who could speak with authority about religion, it was best to remain silent. In keeping with this, the Master said "... when you do not know a thing .... recognize that you do not know it. That is knowledge."[64] Since little was known about religion and since Confucius was concerned not with reform of religion but with reform of the social and political world, he deemed it wise to remain silent and not to include the subject of religion in his curriculum. Was he therefore non-religious? Creel thought not. "... he probably believed in it but was not much interested in it since the force was beyond man's control and thus nothing could be done about it anyway."[65] In short, Confucius refused to dogmatize on subjects that did not come within the scope of his teaching or concerns of which he had no exceptional source of information.

In dealing with the curriculum used by Confucius, some of its

63. Ibid., 3:9.
64. Ibid., 2:17.
65. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 122. Reginald Johnson came to the same conclusion as Creel concerning the religious faith of Confucius. cf Johnson, Confucianism and Modern China, p.88

content and principles have been enumerated. Let us now consider in more detail the teaching method he used, his procedures of student evaluation, and the qualities he sought in his students.

The method of instruction commonly used today involving lectures with a minimum amount of student participation was alien to the way of Confucius. His school had no class-rooms in the sense that we think and know of them.[66] The class was probably held wherever the Master found himself and one or more of his students. A class did not meet at any set time nor place; its sole existence depended upon the presence of the Master and the student(s). When students were present, Confucius might talk with them in a form similar to a lecture and request their comments or questions as he proceeded. At other times, the class might consist of a period of questioning conducted either by Confucius or by one or more of the students. The class could exist under a tree or along a path as the group walked. In a situation such as this where education is informally conducted, study and teaching become one with the role of student and teacher becoming an interchangeable one. Confucius served as teacher and at other times was in the capacity of student.

During the learning sessions there was very little strict discipline. This allowed the students to question their Master freely and thereby engage in vital teaching and/or learning experiences. Yet in the midst of this unstructured atmosphere, there was no doubt as to

66. Creel, Confucius, The Man and the Myth, p. 78. Creel states: "Those of his students who did not have homes nearby probably lived in Confucius' home."

the position of Confucius. "The Master's manner was affable yet firm, commanding but not harsh, polite but easy."[67] By use of this approach, Confucius was able to gain the confidence and loyalty of his students and by being loyal to them, they were loyal to him.

It was not his nature to hold back from them any of the knowledge or wisdom he possessed.

> The Master said, I have transmitted what was taught to me without making up anything of my own. I have been faithful to and loved the ancients. In these respects, I make bold to think not even our old P'eng can have excelled me.[68]
>
> The Master said, My friends, I know you think that there is something I am keeping from you. There is nothing at all that I keep from you. I take no steps about which I do not consult you, my friends. Were it otherwise, I should not be Ch'iu.[69]

Further, he used a concept of education that we associate with "modern" times - the concept that each should learn according to his own individual nature, ability, and understanding. This was illustrated for example in the story of two students who had been taught the same lesson. To the one Confucius urged he put the lesson into effect immediately while to the other, Confucius advised caution before the lesson was put into practice. When asked why such different advice was given concerning the same lesson, Confucius replied that the first student was slow to act and needed to be pushed forward while the second was too eager to do things and needed to be held back. This is a sound

67. Analects, 7:31.
68. Ibid., 7:1.
69. Ibid., 7:23.

educational principle and it is not surprising to find the great teacher, Confucius, using it.[70] Creel stated that this was the only method that Confucius could have used successfully,

> for he was not merely teaching scholars, but producing gentlemen capable of playing decisive roles in the world. He was not teaching certain subjects but certain students. Therefore his methods were intensely individual, different for each student since each student presented a different problem.[71]

It was not his objective to create a group of scholars that all thought alike and were shaped in the mold of his making. He attempted to develop in each student his own skills, capabilities, and interests so that each might preserve his own personality and come to a maturity that would benefit society.

Perhaps the most powerful element in his method of instruction was that of his own example.[72] He taught music, archery, and chariot-driving through his own example and urged his students to excel his level of attainment. He was adept in allowing "Li" to shine through all his activities. As he had studied all of his life, so did he urge his students to do the same.

> The Master said, I have listened in silence and noted what was said, I have never grown tired of learning nor wearied of teaching others what I have learnt. These at least are merits which I can confidently claim.[73]

70. Ibid., 11:23.
71. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, p. 79. Compare this with the Analects, 19:12.
72. Wright & Twitchett, Confucian Personalities, p. 7.
73. Analects 7:2.

How did Confucius know whether or not his students were learning what they ought to learn? How did he know if a student was capable of grasping the ideas being taught? The evaluation of student learning was achieved through the use of examinations but not in the sense of a written examination that became prevalent at a later time. Confucius used an informal examination that was given subtly. The examination consisted of a period of oral questioning during which Confucius carefully observed the students' reactions which provided basic clues as to their character, capabilities, willingness to learn, and understanding of the ideas he had exposed them to. Another technique used by the Master was that of watching his students in action in the world. Book 2:9, cited previously in this paper tells how Yen Hui was judged to be lacking in understanding or not. Confucius simply watched his student's activities. In Book 11:24 an excellent example of evaluation through the question and answer technique is given as Confucius asked four of his students what they would do if they were employed by a state to rule. Of the four, only one gave the correct answer, and he presumably passed the examination.

Not only did Confucius use a system of informal evaluation in testing his students, but he advocated self-examination as a procedure to measure progress. The student Tseng Ts'an did this.

> Daily I examine myself on three points: Have I failed to be loyal in my work for others? Have I been false with my friends? Have I failed to pass on that which I was taught?[74]

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74. Ibid., 1:4.

The famous passage of Book 2:4 of the Analects in which Confucius told of his own progress of learning during his life-time is a good example of what he meant by self-examination. Equally illustrative is this saying:

> In the presence of a good man, think all the time how you may learn to equal him. In the presence of a bad man, turn your gaze within.
>
> Tzu-kung was always criticizing other people. The Master said, It is fortunate for him that he is so perfect himself as to have time to spare for this. I myself have none.[75]

What were the qualities Confucius looked for in his students? Basically they had to be eager to learn; they had to have the ability to learn; they had to have the proper motivation for learning. He was concerned with their motivation for learning. He was opposed to material reward as a motivation for learning.[76] Neither poverty nor low birth served as barriers in entering Confucius' school.[77] A few other qualities are listed below as found in the Analects, some of which demonstrate statements made previously in this paper.

> The Master said, A gentleman who never goes on eating till he is sated, who does not demand comfort in his home, who is diligent in business and cautious in speech, who associates with those that possess the Way and thereby corrects his own faults, such a one may indeed be said to have a taste for learning.
>
> He who learns but does not think is lost. He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.

75. Ibid., 4:17; 14:30.
76. Analects, 8:12. Apparently Confucius found it difficult to keep the hope of monetary reward out of the minds of his students. These are his words: The Master said, One who will study for three years without thought of reward would be hard to find indeed.
77. Ibid., 7:7.

> The Master said, A Knight whose heart is set upon the Way, but who is ashamed of wearing shabby clothes and eating coarse food, is not worthy calling into counsel.
>
> The Master said, Incomparable indeed was Hui! A handful of rice to eat, a gourd full of water to drink, living in a mean street -- others would have found it unendurably depressing but to Hui's cheerfulness it made no difference at all. Incomparable indeed was Hui.
>
> The Master said, Learn as if you were following someone who you could not catch up, as though it were someone you were frightened of lowing.
>
> The Master said, Only one who bursts with eagerness do I instruct; only one who bubbles with excitement, do I enlighten. If I hold up one corner and a man cannot come back to me with the other three, I do not continue the lesson.[78]

In the past it was the custom to assign to Confucius the responsibility for the backwardness of China. Some have claimed Confucius was responsible for the lack of reasoning power among the Chinese; he was responsible for the fossilization of Chinese society because he extolled the virtues of a long dead past; he was responsible for the lack of knowledge of the physical laws of nature and the world; and because he was a collector of tradition and expounder of moral philosophy and ignored other factors, he was the cause of the stifling of much potential and creative thought in China.[79] Perhaps these incorrect concepts of Confucius have been at least partly dispelled by the preceding discussion of some of the aspects of his educational theory and practice.

His importance lies in the greatness of his character, personality, and stress upon education. By the magnetism of his personality he was able to catch the imagination of men and eventually through those

78. Ibid., 1:14; 4:9; 2:15; 4:9; 6:9; 8:17; 8:8.
79. George Kennan, The Outlook, "The Old Education in China," (October 19, 1907), Vol. 87, No. 7. cf Harrymon Maurer, Fortune, "The Trouble with China is Confucius," (April, 1947), Vol. XXXV, No. 4, 125ff.

who followed him, to enthrone a philosophy that extends into our day. In stressing the importance of education, he also appears to have been the first one who made teaching his first and only concern for life or who regarded it as a profession and proper means of livelihood.[80]

> He and his school are responsible for the pedagogic tradition which characterizes all of later Chinese history, for the optimistic belief in the perfectibility of man through learning, and for the reverence for the scholar and the man of letters so pronounced in Chinese society.[81]

In our own day of chaos and confusion, evil and corrupt forces, it would be a happy occasion to have another Confucius on the educational scene who would call the world back to a sane philosophy of life that would have as its ultimate goal the welfare and happiness of all society.

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80. Creel, Confucius, The Man and The Myth, chapter VII and compare with Sherley-Price, Confucius and Christ, p. 44.
81. de Bary, Sources of Chinese Tradition, p. 20.